

On a new species of *HOPLOCEPHALUS*, from Sutton Forest,

By WILLIAM MACLEAY, F.L.S.

I am indebted to C. S. Bransby, Esq., of Moss Vale, for a species of *Hoplocephalus*, lately captured by him somewhere in the Sutton Forest country.

I find it to be quite distinct from any of the species hitherto known or described.

I subjoin a somewhat detailed description of the snake, which I propose to name in honour of its discoverer.

*HOPLOCEPHALUS BRANSBYI.*

General form rather robust and cylindrical, the tail tapering to a very fine point. Head scarcely broader than the neck, rather flat and short, and rounded at the muzzle; vertical shield twice as long as wide and six-sided, the two anterior facing the posterior frontals, and nearly in a straight line; the two posterior converging to a rather rounded angle, and those abutting on the parietal shields parallel. The posterior frontals are large, five-sided, and separated from the second upper labial by the nasal and anterior oculars, the side abutting on the nasal being very short. The anterior frontals are short (one third the length of posterior), form a very straight suture with the posterior frontals, and are prolonged into an acute angle between them and the nasals. Nasal shield twice as long as high, with the nostril small and in the middle, and the angle formed by the rostral and anterior frontals very acute. Rostral shield low, not reaching the dorsal surface of the head. The anterior ocular shield pentagonal and emarginate in front; both posterior oculars small, the inferior one largest. The superciliary shields are nearly as broad as the vertical; the occipitals are large and divergent behind. The fourth lower labial very large. All the head shields more or less covered with minute granules. The eyes are moderately large, pupils round. The scales of the back are in 15 rows before the middle of the body, and in 17 rows behind, and are all of elongate form with the apex a little rounded, except the two outer lateral rows which are broad and

much rounded at the tip. The abdominal plates are large and number 150. The anal plate is single; the subcaudals number 47. The colour on the upper surface is olive brown, with a narrow reddish yellow band rounded anteriorly behind the head, preceded by a still narrower blackish band, and a black vertebral line one scale wide along the whole length of the body from the neck. The under surface is yellow, each abdominal plate having a blackish margin, and the whole becoming darker towards the tail. The scales of the outer or lateral row are yellow, with a black mark on each side, forming two black stripes extending to the tail; the scales of the next row have each a reddish spot near the base. The head is entirely yellow below the mouth, above only the labial shields and small portions of the anterior ocular and other plates are yellowish. The total length is 17 inches.

The number of species of this genus now known is about 25, varying in length from six feet to less than one foot, all highly venomous, and, as far as my experience goes, seeming to belong almost exclusively to the temperate regions of Australia. They are abundant in Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and New South Wales. Several species also are found in Queensland, but not, I believe, north of Port Denison, and I have never in the many collections of snakes I have had from the Endeavour River, Cape York, and Port Darwin, seen a single example of the genus. It is stated, however, by Mr. Krefft, whose work on the Snakes of Australia cannot be too highly praised, that *Hoplocephalus curtus* has been found as far north as the Gulf of Carpentaria.

On the other hand the genera *Diemenia* and *Pseudechis* seem to get more numerous in the tropical parts of Australia. Of the four species of the latter genus described, three, *P. australis*, *scutellatus*, and *Darwiniensis* are intra-tropical, and I have a fourth species from Port Darwin of large size, over six feet long, with the vertical shield more elongate and triangular than in *P. Darwiniensis*.

I may mention here that I saw a few days ago a fine specimen of *Dipsas fusca* procured by Dr. J. C. Cox, from the Mudgee district, a very unlikely place one would suppose for a snake of its habits.

I take this opportunity also of correcting a mistake of mine in a previous paper. In page 221 of Vol. II. of our Proceedings, I gave the name of *Elapocephalus* to a new genus of snakes from Port Darwin. I find that Dr. Gunther had previously (Cat. Brit. Mus., Snakes, App. 2, p. 276) used the same name for a genus of South American Snakes of a very different family. I propose now to substitute the generic name *Elapocranium* for the Port Darwin Snake.

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On the power of locomotion in the *Tunicata*.

By WILLIAM MACLEAY, F.L.S.

A few weeks ago I found the sandy beach at Elizabeth Bay, strewn at low water, with a number of large Ascidian Mollusks. In this there is nothing remarkable, the severe storm of the 2nd of this month, having no doubt torn from their hold on the rocky or sandy bed of the sea, these helpless masses.

But I have observed with some astonishment that these masses are, or seem to be, capable of a certain amount of locomotion.

What I have observed is, that these large Ascidians do change their positions most undoubtedly; that in doing so they leave upon the wet sand a distinct track in accordance with the weight and size of the mass; and that these movements are not in any way attributable to winds or waves. I at first thought it possible that the movements might be due to the agency of some of the animals adhering to the outside of the mass, but I found that the only organic attachments, excepting a few small shells, were clusters of simple Ascidians, utterly incapable therefore of combined action, and much too small for their individual efforts to produce any effect.